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Contact: Bert Scoglietti
(302) 739-4206
(302) 233-2196 cell
Jane Haseldine
(302) 672-5104

Governor Minner Kicks Off Governor's Mentoring Initiative **Campaign at Central Middle School**

-More than 35,000 Delaware Youth Could Benefit from Having a Mentor-

City: *Dover* –Governor Ruth Ann Minner today encouraged state employees to become mentors to the more than 35,000 Delaware children who could greatly benefit from having the positive influence of a caring adult during the official kick off for the Governor's Mentoring Initiative campaign.

This innovative program allows state employees to use one hour of flex time in their weekly work schedules to mentor a child in a school or after school setting. Flexed leave can be combined with an employee's lunch hour or it can be used at the beginning or end of an employee's work day.

In the Dover area alone, more than 700 children remain on a waiting list in hopes of being connected to a mentor. In Delaware, more than 35,000 youth have been identified who could benefit from having a mentor.

"By giving just one hour a week, a mentor can positively change the life of a child forever. We know that young people who are mentored perform better in school. They have increased self esteem and have better relationships with friends, parents, teachers and their communities," Governor Minner said.

"With Delaware State Government employees joining in the state-wide mentoring initiative, the network for mentoring greatly benefits by that infusion of mentors," said Timothy Barnekov, co-chair of the Delaware Mentoring Council and University of Delaware Dean of the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy. "We are grateful that the Governor has made it possible for employees to make a commitment to mentoring and Delaware's youth."

"Many people wish that they could do more to help others if they only had more time. The Governor's Mentoring Initiative gives State employees the flexibility that they need to make a difference in a young person's life," said Office of Management and Budget Director Jennifer "JJ" Davis.

To find out more about the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, go to www.delawarementoring.org/